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Edmonton metro

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FINAL MOMENTS

Inside the terror in Aleppo, metroNEWS

KEVIN TUONG/FOR METRO

HAPPY IN AN UNHEALTHY WAY

Where Edmonton ranks nationwide in new health report, metroNEWS

Alberta probe nets $500K fine

ENVIRONMENT

Edmonton company pled guilty in ozone-depletion case

Alex Boyd
Metro | Edmonton

The federal government has fined a company with six Edmonton-area locations a staggering $500,000 for selling aerosol products that damage the ozone layer.

It's the largest fine ever levied in Alberta in an ozone-depletion case, officials said.

Acklands-Grainger Inc. specializes in industrial safety products and fasteners, and an Alberta investigation found it was selling two products containing hydrochlorofluorocarbons, or HCFCs, an ozone-depleting substance banned in Canada.

On Monday, representatives for the company pled guilty in the Provincial Court of Alberta to violating the Ozone-Depleting Substances Regulation of the Environmental Protection Act.

Between 2012 and 2014 the company sold 110 cans of HV Switchgear Lubricant and three cans of a cleaner for electrical equipment called Sprayon EL2204.

All contained HCFCs.

"The prohibitions have been in a place for a while," said Daniel Smith, acting regional director of environmental enforcement Environment and Climate Change Canada.

"Our view is that this is something that was preventable."

The severity of the offence, the potential harm to the environment and the company's history are weighed when deciding on a penalty, Smith said.

Smith added officials first sent Acklands-Grainger Inc. a warning letter in 2003 about a product they were selling. They were also charged and fined $150,000 in 2005 in relation to another product.

"Our goal is, through enforcement, we're hoping to deter future violations, both relating to the company but also in the industry as a whole," Smith said.

In a statement provided to Metro, Acklands-Grainger said they "inadvertently" sold the two products.

"These two products are prohibited in Canada, and this occurred because two suppliers were unaware of the difference in regulatory environments between the U.S. and Canada," the statement reads.

"We took responsibility for these errors and took immediate steps to prevent further sales of these products."

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metro NEWS
Your essential daily news

Task force calls for national age for legalized recreational pot smoking to be set at 18. **Canada**

Cree signs are learning opportunity

INDIGENOUS IDENTITY

Reconciliation includes using native words, poet argues

Jeremy Simes
Metro | Edmonton

"It was such a beautiful moment," Sewell said of the men teaching her the Cree word, which means 'helping one another,' and which is also the name of an Edmonton organization.

"They knew that word and they knew it was important, and that it was important to say it right."

But Edmonton's former poet laureate isn't feeling similarly proud of Coun. Bryan Anderson's request Tuesday for city officials to choose easier-to-pronounce Cree words or create Anglicized versions for street names that honour indigenous heritage.

Anderson argued at council Tuesday that many residents struggle to pronounce or write some of the names, such as Maskêkosihk (Muss-Kay-Go-See) Trail, when giving directions.

"I can learn, but I struggle, so why would we create situations where people are going to be forced to struggle?" Anderson said. "There are usability solutions."

Anderson said he has no beef with some Cree names — like Keehewin and Kaskitayo, which are names of Edmonton neighbourhoods — because they're spelled phonetically.

He added that other Edmonton neighbourhoods, like Bearspaw and Sweetgrass, are also derived from Cree words Masgwaahsid (Mas-gwa-ah-sid) and Wikaskokiseyin (Wee-kas-kookee-sey-yin).

But Sewell, who identifies as indigenous, disagrees.

She said the hard-to-pronounce names are a learning opportunity.

"Cree and Blackfoot people managed to learn those names, so I think the rest of us can do it, too," she said.

"It's an opportunity to look to our Cree and Blackfoot community as teachers. That seems like a large and interesting step towards reconciliation."

Sewell also said translating Cree terms into English prompts her to ask, "Who is this easier for? Who does it harm?"

"I love English, but it's not simple. I think we could do ourselves a huge, enriching favour to use indigenous names as an opportunity to bring fresh eyes to what this land has been, is and can be."

Former Edmonton poet laureate Anna Marie Sewell says indigenous road names present a learning opportunity for people unaware with the phrases. KEVIN TUONG/FOR METRO

Maskêkosihk

Maskêkosihk
Pronounced Muss-Kay-Go-See, Maskêkosihk is a road in south Edmonton's new Riverview area. It translates as 'land of the medicines' or 'people of the medicines.'

Keehewin

Keehewin
A neighbourhood in southwest Edmonton. It means 'eagle' in Cree.

Tawatinâ

Tawatinâ
The name of the new bridge for the Valley Line. It means 'valley' in Cree.

REVENUE

Mayor says cities need more tools

Mayor Don Iveson says Edmonton has to hike property taxes to fix roads when senior governments don't deliver promised grant dollars or transfers, and he's calling for change.

Iveson — along with four other big city mayors, including those from Calgary, Toronto, Ottawa and Vancouver — penned a letter Tuesday to provincial governments and Ottawa, demanding more fiscal powers for cities.

The letter explained that city governments are currently limited to using property taxes to support growing operating budgets at a time when investing in transit, roads and other infrastructure is urgently needed.

"Our request is simple: give us the tools to do the job and the accountability that goes with them and we'll build great cities for the benefit of all Canadians," the letter reads.

Iveson said Alberta promised Edmonton a grant of $1.4 billion through its municipal sustainability initiative, a plan that provides cities with funding for infrastructure.

But, he added, the city only saw $900 million of that grant, stretched over more years than originally promised.

He said the city isn't asking for new money but instead for certainty, and without it property taxes are the only way to raise revenues.

JEREMY SIMES / METRO EDMONTON

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HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS

Bakery sorry for 'Black Pete'

Dutch Delicious, the Edmonton bakery that stirred Christmas controversy last week for celebrating the holiday with Zwarte Piet, or "Black Pete," has posted an apology on Facebook.

"We recently held our annual Sinterklaas celebration on Dec. 3," the post reads, referring to the traditional Dutch holiday.

"We do realize that we have offended people with our Zwarte Piet character. So to those we have offended, it was done very unintentionally and we are sorry for causing hurt," the post continues.

"That is why we have decided to change our festivities in the coming years to incorporate a Chimney Piet who will have soot streaks on his face and lose the curly hair and red lips."

According to Dutch tradition, Sinterklaas, or Saint Nicholas, travelled with Black Pete, who is a Moor person from Spain.

The character has drawn controversy in recent years for being portrayed using black face, often with exaggerated red lips and curly hair.

Many Edmontonians spoke out against the bakery using the character last week, arguing it's not appropriate in Canada. METRO

Edmontonians a happy bunch of couch potatoes

REPORT

Citizens rank low in fitness, high in life satisfaction

Kevin Maimann
Metro | Edmonton

Edmonton is happy and unhealthy.

That's according to the Conference Board of Canada's first-ever City Health Monitor report, which ranks 10 Canadian cities on their physical and socio-economic health.

The report uses 24 indicators broken into four main categories.

Edmonton comes in third place in life satisfaction, despite placing dead last with a "D" rating in population health.

Researcher Greg Sutherland said Edmonton has higher rates of heart disease, strokes, cancer, hypertension and diabetes than most other cities — but it doesn't seem to matter to us.

"It's not affecting their happiness, which is weird," he said.

"It's all about how you perceive your health as opposed to what your actual rated health is."

Sutherland, the principal economist in the Canadian Alliance for Sustainable Health Care, said it's hard to say exactly why Edmonton has a high prevalence of serious health conditions, but we scored "C" in smoking and physical activity and "D" on eating fruits and vegetables.

Life satisfaction rankings are based on measures like stress level, a sense of belonging to one's community, and perception of health — so it could be that Edmontonians think they're healthier than they actually are.

"While it's true that we've seen some economic turbulence in Edmonton recently, incomes there are pretty much higher than every other spot in the country," he said.

Sutherland hopes the research will nudge Edmonton toward long-term action on health promotion. He also warned that people should not put too much stock in the results, however, stating they only give a "broad view" of each city's health.

"When we put it all together, we have some that are just a little healthier than others," he said.

Saskatoon placed first in the overall ranking, while Montreal was last.

Though Edmonton is full of leisure opportunities, it isn't the healthiest city, according to a new study. ISTOCK

HOW THE CITY RANKS ON HEALTHY LIFESTYLE INDICATORS NATIONALLY

Heavy drinking	B
Obesity	C
Smoking	C
Fruit and vegetables	D
Influenza immunization	C
Physical activity	C
Overall grade	**D**

DISEASES

Patients potentially exposed to tuberculosis: Health agency

Alberta Health Services is notifying 200 people who may have been exposed to tuberculosis at two Edmonton outpatient clinics.

The organization mailed notification letters Tuesday, after potential exposures to a confirmed case of TB at the Kaye Edmonton Clinic and the University of Alberta Hospital.

In a release, officials said the confirmed case of TB is not an ongoing risk in either facility, and the general public is not at risk.

The notification letters include information on TB assessment, screening and treatment, if required. Follow-up screening is being handled by the TB Services and Communicable Disease Control Team.

Tuberculosis bacteria can be spread when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks. Others are infected when they inhale the bacteria into their lungs.

Most of the time the bacteria stays inactive, but in some cases can develop into the tuberculosis disease. METRO

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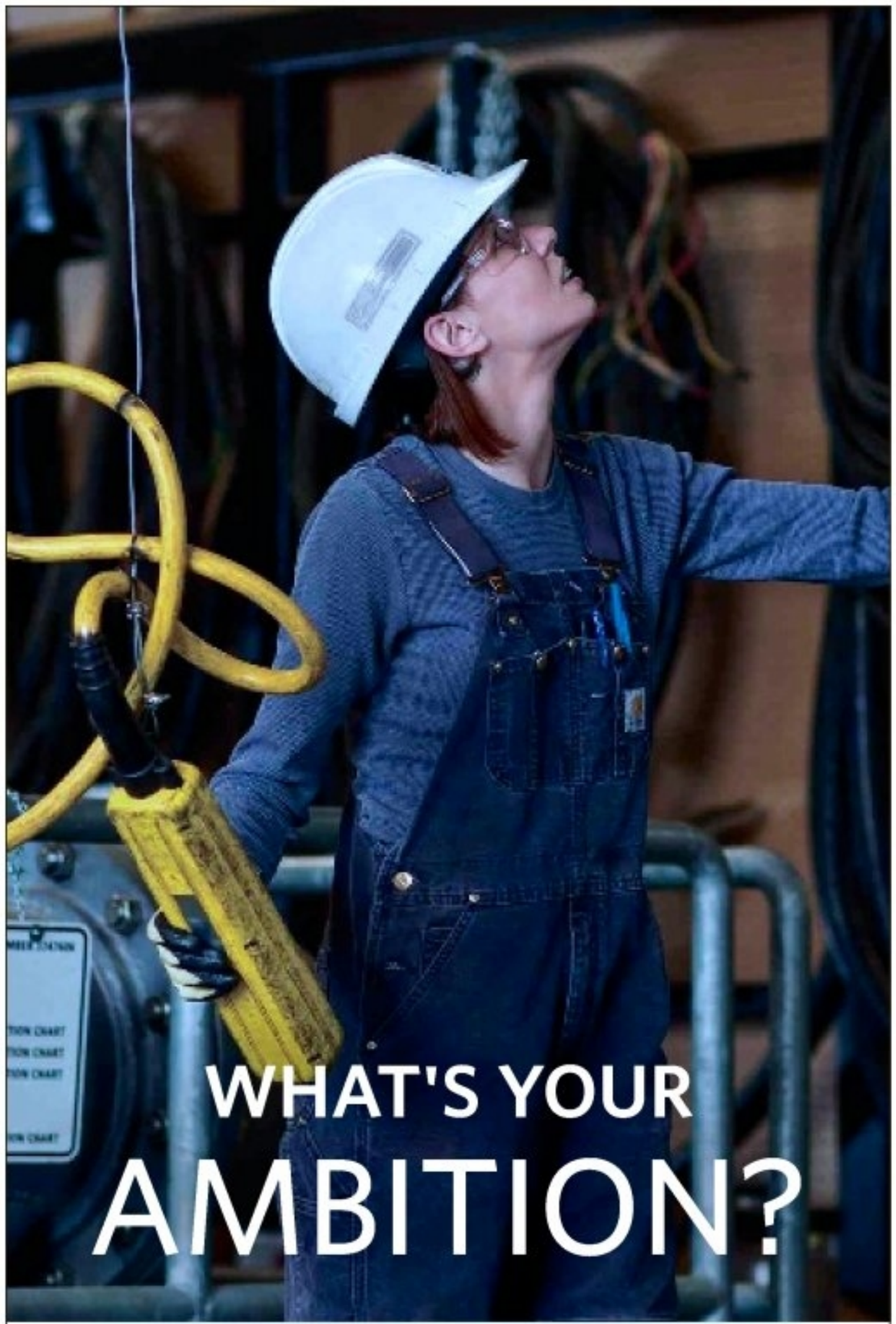

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WE ARE ESSENTIAL TO ALBERTA | NAIT

Opposition boycotts panel on kids in care

POLITICS

Party leaders say initiative lacks teeth

Alberta Minister of Human Services Irfan Sabir THE CANADIAN PRESS

An Alberta legislature panel looking at ways to keep children safe in government care has morphed into a standoff between parties on both sides of the aisle.

Leaders of the four opposition parties said Tuesday they will boycott the panel unless Premier Rachel Notley's government gives it the tools to get at the root of the problem.

They also said the minister in charge, Irfan Sabir, needs to excuse himself from the panel because some recent problems are tied to him.

"Essentially the minister is on trial here and he's part of the judge and jury the way the government has designed (the panel)," said Progressive Conservative interim leader Ric McIver.

"It's all unacceptable. Why meet if you're not going to do anything?"

Earlier Tuesday, the opposition leaders sent a list of changes they believe are needed for the panel to have the necessary authority and credibility.

The changes include a commitment to an open process and protection for those who come forward from being punished in the workplace for speaking out.

They also want Sabir to testify.

The leaders, and NDP deputy government house leader Deron Bilous, said they haven't closed the door on negotiations.

"We're trying to work with the government here," said Wildrose Leader Brian Jean.

Bilous, however, said the panel will begin its work soon, with or without the opposition.

> **The minister is on trial here and he's part of the judge and jury.**
> Ric McIver

Sabir and Notley announced the panel on Dec. 1 after it was revealed through media reports and the child and youth advocate that there had been little action for two years on the death of a four-year-old girl named Serenity.

The girl died while in the care of extended family members. She was sent to hospital with severe brain trauma and signs of violent physical and sexual abuse. She was also extremely malnourished and weighed just 18 pounds.

Child advocate Del Graff reported that warning signs of maltreatment were investigated and dismissed, and that after Serenity's horrific injury her siblings told authorities she was routinely hit.

Sabir promised action when the issue became public late last month. But opposition members are now calling for him to resign after he admitted last week that after his promise it took another two weeks for Mounties to get access to the government's electronic file on Serenity.

Sabir, with Notley's backing, is refusing to quit the human services portfolio. He has said there is much work to do and he is committed to doing it.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

FUNDING

Council passes lowest tax-increase budget in decade

Jeremy Simes
Metro | Edmonton

Edmonton will face the lowest tax increase it has seen in a decade next year after city council passed the 2016-18 supplemental budget adjustment Tuesday.

Council finalized this year's budget talks Tuesday, which resulted in a 2.9 per cent property tax increase in 2017 — down from the proposed 3.1 per cent hike. That means the average Edmonton household will pay about $6.59 a day for city services and programs next year — or, an extra $66 yearly in 2017 and $120 in 2018.

City councillors had to make tough decisions prior to the hike and chose to not fund many groups. For example, council said no to funding Nuit Blanche, Art of Living and Heritage Festival's "out-of-the-box" museum.

However, Edmontonians can still expect major projects to proceed, like EndPovertyEdmonton, which will now begin work on lifting 10,000 residents out of poverty.

Council will also re-invest $22 million — 1.5 per cent of its total 1.7 per cent in savings — into neighbourhood renewal, a program that funds repairs to roads, sidewalks and streetlights in roughly 300 aging neighbourhoods.

Mayor Don Iveson said the budget invests in people and infrastructure.

"That's not an easy feat when you consider 2016 has brought more economic uncertainty to our region and with it, the demands placed on the City of Edmonton have increased," he said.

The tax rate is finalized in the spring after the province sets the education tax.

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Vader alleges abuse in jail

COURT

His lawyer is asking to stay conviction or reduce sentence

An Alberta man convicted of killing two missing seniors says he was humiliated with strip searches, attacked by guards and subjected to horrendous living conditions while in custody.

Travis Vader, who did not testify during his high-profile murder trial, stood in the prisoner's box Tuesday during his sentencing hearing in Edmonton and listed numerous allegations of abuse over the last six years.

"I wouldn't treat my dog like that," the 44-year-old said about the many times he spent crammed in a holding tank with about 20 other people.

Other times he was in segregation, alone in a cell for 23 hours a day with no TV or radio, and feces were squeezed under his door.

Guards also taunted him, Vader said.

"Did you do it?" he said they repeatedly asked him.

"Where's the bodies, Vader?"

Vader was convicted earlier this year of manslaughter in the July 2010 deaths of Lyle and Marie McCann. The elderly couple vanished on their way to a camping trip in British Columbia.

Their burned-out motorhome and a vehicle they had been towing were discovered in the days after they vanished. But their bodies have never been found.

A judge determined that Vader, a desperate drug addict, came across the seniors in their RV and killed them during a robbery.

Defence lawyer Nathan Whitling is asking the court to stay Vader's conviction or at least reduce his sentence — even to time served — because of mistreatment. An application before the court also claims RCMP prevented Vader from consulting with a lawyer when he was questioned about the McCanns.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

> **I wouldn't treat my dog like that.**
> Travis Vader

Travis Vader was convicted earlier this year of manslaughter in the July 2010 deaths of Lyle and Marie McCann. THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE

MARIJUANA

Association unhappy with pot task force

The Alberta Liquor Store Association is disappointed by a federal task force's report on the legalization and sale of marijuana, as it argues against the idea of co-location. The Association represents almost 600 liquor stores across the province and has been pushing for their members to be allowed to sell marijuana when it becomes legal.

"Today's report from the Task Force was both encouraging and disappointing," said association president Ivonne Martinez, in a release. "On the one hand, we are encouraged to see the recommendation that provinces regulate the distribution and retail sale of cannabis."

But Martinez also hit out at the task force's recommendation on allowing liquor stores to also sell marijuana. "Not only does this contradict the recommendation to allow provinces to decide, it ignores the solid track record Alberta's private liquor retailers have earned when it comes to the responsible sale of controlled substances," Martinez said.

METRO

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Eighteen-year-olds could legally buy pot

POLICY

Federal task force releases report planned on legalization

The federal government will bring in legislation next spring that could see storefront or mail-order sales of legal recreational pot to Canadians aged 18 and older if Ottawa adopts recommendations in a new report.

The report by a task force assigned to study how the Liberals could implement their campaign promise to legalize pot was released Tuesday, and said three provinces, including Ontario, may want to set the legal marijuana consumption age higher to match their minimal drinking age of 19.

Overall, the task force chair said regulation of many aspects of a new legalized marijuana market should be left up to provinces working with municipalities. It called for strict rules on personal possession, sale and distribution, along with massive investments on public awareness campaigns, research into the medical effects of marijuana, and on boosting law enforcement's ability to police drug-impaired drivers.

Anne McLellan, chair of the federal task force that released 80 recommendations Tuesday, said the panel "took into account" advice from the Canadian Medical Association which called for a minimum age of 21 years old for legal consumption based on fears of damage to teenage brains.

But McLellan said the report opted for a younger age to avoid the criminalization of the highest group of pot users — youth aged 18-25.

In an interview, McLellan said: "18 is the age at which young adults, and I call them deliberately young adults, are expected to be able to make decisions."

The 106-page report did not say at what price it expects organized crime or black market sellers would be squeezed out of the game, saying those questions will be up to provinces and commercial players in the marketplace. Generally its researchers assumed that pot now sells for about $8 a gram in the illegal market. The task force did not project how much revenue governments could make once they begin collecting taxes on legal pot sales.

But it made specific recommendations that individuals be allowed to legally possess 30 grams for personal use, or grow 4 plants in their own home, without having to face criminal sanction. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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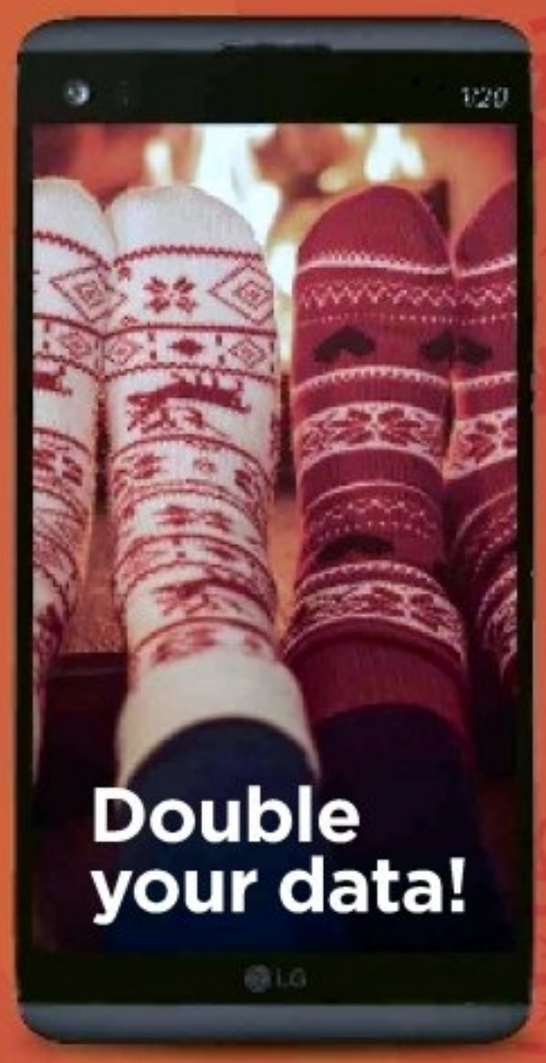

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Alan Thicke dead at 69

Canadian TV personality Alan Thicke has died. He was 69.

Carleen Donovan, a publicist for Thicke's son, singer Robin Thicke, says the actor died from a heart attack on Tuesday in Los Angeles while he was playing hockey with his 19-year-old son Carter, TMZ reported.

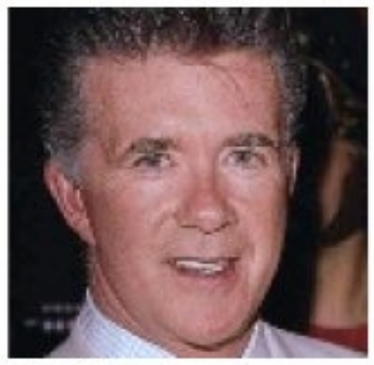
Thicke was most famous for his role as Jason Seaver, the father from '80s sitcom Growing Pains, placing him among the most beloved television dads of all time.

Thicke had been back on the screen recently as part of the Netflix reboot Fuller House.

Born in Kirkland Lake, Ont., Thicke wore many hats during his career, from hosting talk shows and writing for TV series and specials for comedians such as Richard Pryor and Bill Cosby, to composing the theme songs to The Wheel of Fortune, The Facts of Life and Diff'rent Strokes.

He was inducted into Canada's Walk of Fame in 2013.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE



Alan Thicke GETTY IMAGES

NIAGARA FALLS LIGHTS UP

The nightly spectacle of Niagara Falls lit up after dark just got more spectacular. A $3-million upgrade saw the installation of 1,400 new high-tech lights called luminaires that beam brighter and more vivid rainbows of light from Canada onto the famous waterfalls.

Mixed together, the separate red, green, blue and white LED units can illuminate the waterfalls against the night sky in endless combinations that range from subtle hues to deeply saturated colours.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Rebels to evacuate in surrender

Syrian rebels reached a ceasefire deal to evacuate from eastern Aleppo in an effective surrender on Tuesday, as Russia declared all military action had stopped and the Syrian government had assumed control of the former rebel enclave.

The developments, which appeared to restore the remainder of what was once Syria's largest city to President Bashar Assad's forces, followed reports of mass killings by government forces.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon told the emergency meeting he had received "credible reports" of civilians killed by bombing and summary executions by pro-government forces.

The UN human rights office said it had received reports of pro-government forces killing at least 82 civilians in the rapidly-shrinking rebel enclave, including 11 women and 13 children.

A spokesman said the reports described pro-government forces entering homes and killing civilians "on the spot."

Rami Abdurrahman of the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said hundreds of bodies were still under rubble.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Goodbye from Aleppo

Aleppo's doctors, activists and residents bid emotional goodbyes in online videos and social media posts. They wanted to have the final say in the merciless civil war.

MONTHER ETAKY: This planet doesn't want people to live as free or to live as humans.

ABDULKAFI ALHAMDO: At least we know that we were a free people...We didn't want anything else but freedom.

BANA ALABED: My name is Bana, I'm 7 years old. I am talking to the world now live from East #Aleppo. This is my last moment to either live or die.

LINA SHAMY: Every bomb is a new massacre. Save Aleppo, save humanity.

First came the distress calls from doctors in underground shelters and morgues. Then residents under relentless bombardment in the few remaining blocks under rebel control in Aleppo began posting emotional goodbyes on social media and in widely circulated messages.

They wanted to have the final say in the merciless civil war.

"There is a problem with this planet," said Monther Etaky, a 28-year old graphic designer. "This planet doesn't want people to live as free or to live as humans."

The world's view of the Syria conflict has been largely driven by YouTube, Twitter and Facebook — making it one of the world's most documented wars through amateur videos and coverage. This has given the activists a major role in chronicling the war, and in lobbying for the world's response.

Nearly six years into the conflict, they complained the world has been looking the other way.

"Why is this silence? People are being eliminated," tweeted Abdulkafi Alhamdo, an English teacher who has been a vocal critic of President Bashar Assad's government. Then, he wrote: "The last (message). Thanks for Everything. We shared many moments. The last tweets were from an emotional father. Farewell #Aleppo."

A local aid worker who gave only his first name, Omar, sent an emotional recorded message that was widely shared on Whatsapp.

"The government forces are at the end of the street. Forgive us," he said in issuing a tormented apology for failing to protect the rebel enclave, once seen as the jewel of Syria's rebellion.

After four years of holding onto nearly half of what was once Syria's largest city and commercial centre, thousands of residents of rebel-held Aleppo had been cornered in a one-square-mile sliver of land for days as Syrian government troops, backed by Russia, resisted calls for a cease-fire, pushing into the territory as rebel defences crumbled.

Etaky said the fast buckling of rebel defences shocked him at first.

After months of siege imposed since July the rebels had no more power to go on, he said. With their families trapped in the city with them, many fighters left the front lines to tend to their relatives' safety.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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NAIT

Democrats want fair election inquiry

UNITED STATES

Concerned about probe into tampering in Trump's win

Congressional Democrats prodded Republicans on Tuesday to be aggressive and even-handed as lawmakers prepared to run investigations into U.S. intelligence assertions that Russia intruded into last month's elections to help Donald Trump win the White House.

In a written statement, No. 2 House Democrat Steny Hoyer of Maryland and the top Democrats on six House committees said they wanted a congressional probe of Moscow's interference "that is truly bipartisan, that is comprehensive, that will not be restricted by jurisdictional lines."

The Democrats said the analyses should produce "a complete and full accounting of what happened consistent with safeguarding our national security."

The statement seemed to suggest Democrats are wary that the planned investigations — by intelligence committees headed by GOP chairmen in both chambers — might not be as tough as needed, for fear of offending the Republican president-elect.

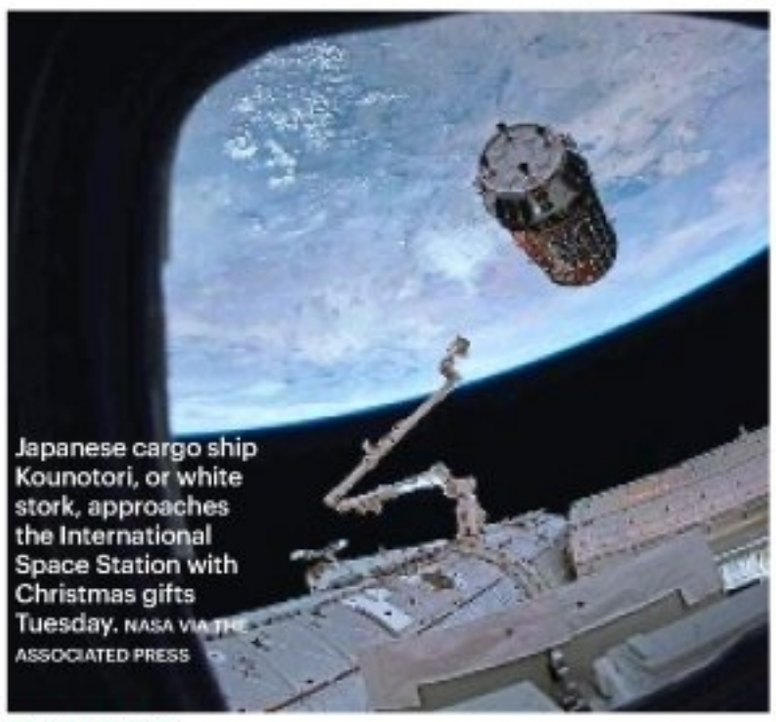
Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., and House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., said Monday they backed investigations by each chamber's intelligence committee into the CIA's finding that Russia interfered with the election.

Ryan endorsed an investigation by the House Intelligence Committee into cyberthreats from other countries and extremist groups and condemned "any state-sponsored cyberattacks on our democratic process."

> **Any intervention by Russia is especially problematic.**
> House Speaker Paul Ryan

"Any intervention by Russia is especially problematic because under President (Vladimir) Putin, Russia has been an aggressor that consistently undermines American interests," Ryan said in a written statement.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Japanese cargo ship Kounotori, or white stork, approaches the International Space Station with Christmas gifts Tuesday. NASA VIA THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

TECHNOLOGY

Japan outdoes Santa delivering in space

Christmas gifts arrived at the International Space Station on Tuesday, courtesy of Japan.

A Japanese cargo ship pulled up at the orbiting lab four days after launching. The capsule — called Kounotori, or white stork — contains nearly 5 tons of food, water, batteries and other supplies. NASA said there also are Christmas presents for the two Americans, three Russians and one Frenchman on board.

Commander Shane Kimbrough, an American, and France's Thomas Pesquet used the robot arm to grab the capsule 250 miles above Chile. Flight controllers in Japan and Houston applauded — and some of the Japanese even bowed. Kimbrough said the crew was "really excited" to accept delivery and radioed thanks to all.

"The vehicle is beautiful, and it performed flawlessly," he said.

Barely two weeks ago, a Russian supply ship was destroyed shortly after liftoff. At the same time, one of NASA's main suppliers, SpaceX, is grounded. So the Japanese delivery is especially welcome.

The astronauts need the six new lithium-ion batteries for next month's spacewalks. They will replace the old nickel-hydrogen batteries that store energy generated by the station's big solar panels.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

Ohio governor OKs 20-week abortion ban

Republican Gov. John Kasich signed a bill Tuesday imposing a 20-week abortion ban while vetoing stricter provisions in a separate measure that would have barred the procedure at the first detectable fetal heartbeat.

Kasich, an abortion-rights opponent, chose instead to sign off on a 20-week ban similar to those now in effect in 15 states and blocked from enforcement in two others. The measures are based on the assertion that fetuses can feel pain then.

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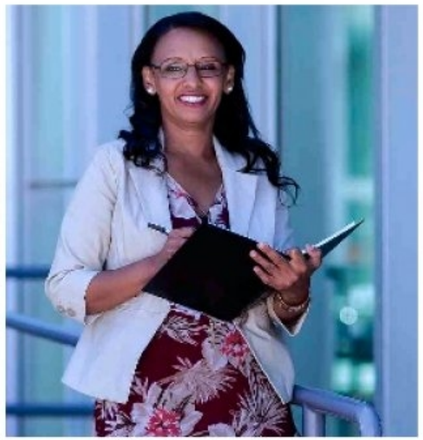

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NAIT

Committee backs return of door-to-door mail delivery

CANADA POST

No need to cut number of service days, it recommends

A House of Commons committee is recommending Canada Post come up with a plan to reinstate door-to-door delivery in parts of the country that lost the service in the last year and maintain a freeze on the installation of community mailboxes.

The report from the Liberal-dominated committee released Tuesday also says there is no need to reduce the number of days a week that mail is delivered, suggesting reduced service could accelerate the decline the corporation has seen in the number of letters handled.

The committee says that based on its hearings, Canadians are open to mail being delivered fewer than five days a week, but that "does not fit the business models of either Canada Post or its paying customers."

Instead, the committee recommends increases in postal rates, muses about expanding Canada Post's mandate to provide cellular services or broadband Internet, including email services or "the basis for a Canadian social network," and suggests the corporation partner with e-commerce companies to increase revenues.

The president of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) said thousands of homes would still not have door-to-door delivery because many addresses were moved over to community mailboxes in 2014 and early 2015.

Canada Post began reducing door-to-door delivery last year, arguing that it could save up to $450 million annually by moving five million more addresses to community mailboxes. The committee said Canada Post provided "weak" financial information to support the estimate.

Canada Post said it will study the recommendations in the report as it looks for major changes to keep itself viable.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

830,000

Addresses moved to community mailboxes to date, resulting in an annual saving of $80 million.

A House of Commons committee is recommending Canada Post freeze installation of community mailboxes. THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE

CANADA-EU

Trudeau, Merkel affirm support for trade deal

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and German Chancellor Angela Merkel, talked trade in a telephone call, affirmed their support for the Canada-EU free trade deal, which both sides hope to finalize next year. The House of Commons is expected to give second reading approval to the bill. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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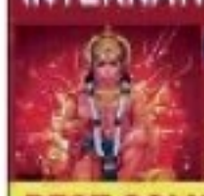

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WHOLESALE

Costco returns to its roots with new store

Costco is launching a new store format in Canada in 2017 that hearkens back to its roots supplying small businesses.

The first Costco Wholesale Business Centre is scheduled to open in the Toronto area in March, according to two senior company executives. "Sometimes we call it internally the Costco retro — we're going back to our base, back to our roots," said Marc-André Bally, vice-president business centre for Costco Wholesale Canada.

While the new format is aimed at small-to-medium business owners, including restaurateurs, lawyers, doctors and gym-owners, all card-carrying Costco members can shop the store, at no additional cost.

At 127,000 square feet, the business centre will be somewhat smaller than the 94 Costcos already operating across Canada. But because there will be no ancillary services — no optician, no bakery, no meat-cutting services — the number of palettes on the floor from which products are sold will be about the same as in a typical Costco, said Andrée Brien, senior vice-president and senior general merchandise manager for Costco Wholesale Canada.

> **Sometimes we call it internally the Costco retro.**
> Marc-André Bally

The new Costco format could be competition for Staples, which caters to small businesses and consumers, according to Maureen Atkinson at J.C. Williams Group.

Business shoppers aren't always happy shopping in locations where consumers also shop, said Atkinson, referring to research her firm has conducted in the DIY marketplace.

"They come in very early in the morning, they get their stuff and they don't want Sally Homemaker getting ahead of them and buying light bulbs. Their time is money so they want to shop efficiently and they don't care what it looks like as long as they get what they are looking for," said Atkinson.

Among the things customers won't find for sale in the Costco Business Centre: diamonds, tires, apparel. Still, at least 80 per cent of products will be unique to the new format, said Bally.

The hours will be geared to a business clientele — from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday to Friday to allow them to shop before opening their own businesses for the day. Saturday hours will be 7 a.m. to 4 p.m.

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Wednesday, December 14, 2016

JESSICA ALLEN ON A CELLULOID OBAMA

As the real Barack prepares to hand the keys over to the man who led the birthers, the last eight years seem really nice, in retrospect.

This year has seen no shortage of biopics. Films like Lion, Loving, and Denial, have introduced some of us to heroes whose names and stories we didn't know. Others have tackled the more familiar lives of those who go by a singular moniker — think Miles, Nina, Jackie, Sully, and Snowden.

And then there's Barry, who now goes by Barack. POTUS is the subject of not one but two films released this year, both of which take place before he was POTUS, and one of which, Barry, will be released on Netflix on December 16. Set in 1981, when Obama transfers to Columbia as a junior majoring in political science and English, the film delighted me, along with an audience of 1,200, when it premiered in September during TIFF.

In our house, biopics are a hot topic. Simon refuses to watch them, but I love them. The irony is that we probably love and hate them for the same reasons; the depiction of a life, be it a single defining moment or a broad sweeping cradle-to-grave affair requires reducing, like a good spaghetti sauce. But Simon has little faith in the genre, so I wasn't surprised that he's expressed no interest in watching Barry.

"What about Primary Colors?" I asked, citing a movie I know he loves.

"That was different," he said. "It was a roman à clef."

I couldn't quite see how that mattered. Would the film's attempt to show the sordid, warts-and-all machinations of the political process be fatally undermined if John Travolta's character was called Bill?

The thing is, Barry is a nice movie. And as the real Obama prepares to hand the keys to the kingdom over to the man who led the public crusade for the release of his birth certificate, the last eight years are starting to seem really nice, too.

Under his watch, same-sex couples gained the right to marry, the unemployment rate fell, as did the number of uninsured adults, and Osama Bin Laden was killed, journalist Stephen Marche noted almost a year ago in the Los Angeles Times. But not everything has come up roses: "Under an African American president, we've grown used to the fact that white police officers kill unarmed black civilians," he wrote. "Under a liberal president, the rich have gotten richer and the middle class has stagnated."

Yet "even as the world is beginning to tote up his legacies for the great pissing contest of op-ed history," Marche wrote a few weeks ago, in a piece called "The Obama Years" for the Los Angeles Review of Books, "I doubt anyone will be able to capture his saturation of our imagination."

He may be right. But Barry manages to capture something beautiful: meditative moments are weaved throughout the narrative that illuminate the life of a man trying to figure out who he is, where he comes from, and where he is going. Even scenes that foreshadow greatness aren't ham-fisted: when Obama meets the parents of a white woman he's dating, he slowly ascends stairs whose walls are lined with gilded-frame oil paintings of past presidents. When he picks up books from a street vendor, one is Ralph Ellison's Invisible Man, which he still cites as a favourite. Another is by W.E.B. Du Bois, the first African American to get a doctorate from Harvard, where Obama went to law school after his time at Columbia.

After the credits rolled and the filmmakers and cast walked on stage, the audience waited for Devon Terrell, the actor who had taken on the enormous task of portraying the president of the United States for his first feature film, to speak. And as he told us how he wanted to avoid caricature (he did), how he learned to write and play basketball left-handed, how he had an emotional connection to Obama because change the name and it could've been about him, we rustled in our seats with surprise upon hearing his voice. "I'm Australian by the way," he said.

"We really wanted to make sure that you could relate to Barry," director Vikram Gandhi said, "that you can glean something about race in America, and that even if you forgot who he would become, you'd still believe he would become someone significant."

But it was sometimes difficult to lose sight that Barry would become Barack, especially during a love scene that left a row of women directly behind me whooping and hollering, "Michelle isn't gonna like that," one of them said, assuming for a moment that she'll see it.

And maybe the Obamas will "Netflix and chill." Biopics are often as much about the past as they are about the present and even the future, even though the foreshadowing is not always intentional. When Barry's filmmakers, for example, conceived of the project and saw it through, they must've felt celebratory. Even back in September there were was a sense of elation in the audience. But now, the moment portrayed, and the last eight years, feel less like a celebration. They feel like an elegy.

Biopics are often as much about the past as they are about the present and even the future.

Devon Terrell as Barack Obama in a scene from Barry. LINDA KALLERUS/NETFLIX/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Jessica Allen is the digital correspondent on CTV's The Social.

VICKY MOCHAMA

The term 'woke' is hereby put on ice until further notice

Dearly beloved, we are gathered here today to say goodbye to "woke."

I'm not putting woke away out of meanness; I just want to save it from the same fate as "shade." A phrase from drag culture's rich lexicon, the mainstreaming of "shade" enriched the cultural landscape. At first. "Shade" now has a thriving career in being misapplied by news outlets desperate for millennial clicks. (The misuse of shade is being expertly adjudicated with tireless, if vexed, commitment by Jezebel's Kara Brown.)

Woke must be buried to save us from ourselves. We clearly don't know what words mean anymore.

Woke had a good run. Erykah Badu sang it in her 2008 song "Master Teacher," which birthed the current popular meaning of the word.

Woke had a quiet adolescence in being used mainly by Badu fans and tired people. But always, for Black people, wokeness meant staying alert to the injustices levelled at our bodies and communities, and continuing to resist the systems that perpetrated those injustices. After the 2012 murder of Trayvon Martin and the exoneration of his murderer, Black people on Twitter reminded each other to #staywoke.

Recently, former Fox News screaming chalkboard Glenn Beck has been described as woke. Writing for the New York Times he said, black lives matter, possibly, especially for the couple of black people he has personally met. (I'm paraphrasing but only to save you the time.)

This belief in the partial humanity of black people, added to a New Yorker interview in which he admitted to being influenced by Barack Obama, made some people believe that Beck was woke now. He is not.

Beck's media platform, The Blaze, continues to peddle the same shrill toxicity that his Fox News show once amplified. Tomi Lahren, a sort of Ann Coulter but blonder and less overtly racist, hosts a show for The Blaze. If Glenn Beck is woke, his work manages not to be.

Wokeness isn't be a badge to be shined; for black people, it's a mode of survival. And for white populations, it must be matched with a desire and actions to protect the most vulnerable and marginalized.

As the horrors of the Trump presidency are unveiled, people — by this, I largely mean white people — will awaken to the fact that Muslims and Mexicans are, indeed, human beings. They must not be allowed to claim wokeness. Rather than let it be diluted by mainstream (read: white) culture in the manner of a Disney movie, we must put woke into the vault.

Words lose their impact when they cease to mean anything. In the way that "alt-right" obscures hate, "woke" gives many people more credit than they've earned.

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Your essential daily news

Wednesday, December 14, 2016

Wonder Woman has been fired from her honorary ambassador job at the U.N. following protests about her suitability as a role model.

5 WINES FOR WHATEVER TYPE OF BOSS YOU HAVE

Face it. You can't buy your boss a piece of clothing (too personal), or cologne (too allusive) or a book on how to be a better boss or human being (as tempting as that may be). But you can never go wrong with a bottle of wine. So to help you wrap up your gift game, we've paired five bottles to five breeds of bosses. See if you can find yours on the list. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

1 Young and restless boss

2015 Big Bill Ridiculously Big Cabernet Sauvignon, Western Cape, South Africa (LCBO 457119, $12.95, in stores only)

If your boss is under 35 and recently discovered the glories of fermented grape juice, thrill him or her with this red — it's a bit of a big deal. Not only does it sport a funky name and cool label, it tastes amazing, with loads of ripe, opulent fruit layered with notes of bonfire, cigar, baking spices and chocolate-covered burnt almond. And the wine is a tribute to a real-life hero, making it a great boss gift. This bottle was made to honour William "Big Bill" Millar, the boxing champ, war hero, rugby captain and first GM of this wine's winery, KWV. A solid gift idea for the millennial boss. **Score: 89+**

2 Praise-happy boss

Santa Margherita Brut Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore, Veneto, Italy (Vintages Essential 687582, $18.95 reg., $16.95 till Dec. 30)

You know the boss whose eagerness to praise knows no bounds? The one who lives for small successes, publicly applauding everything from big business wins to the most inane ideas. Resist the urge to give him or her a box of shiny stars and instead give something to toast the next achievement. So give a bottle or two of this delicious, dry, pear-and-seaspray-scented Prosecco and be done with it. **Score: 94**

3 The Devil Wears Prada boss

NV Paul Dangin & Fils Brut Cuvee Carte Blanche Champagne, France (Vintages 450460, $51.95, in stores only)

To impress this bejewelled boss, you need something so profoundly stylish that only those in the know would see it for the gem it is. The find? This beautiful Blanc de Blancs Champagne, which Maxim's of Paris has been serving for years (with Maxim's labelling of course). Pierced by a delicate string of tiny, persistent bubbles and brimming with aromas and flavour of the best-ever apple crumble edged with salted nuts, this wine is drop-dead gorgeous. Paul Dangin & Fils also supplies Champagne to the British royal household by appointment from Her Majesty the Queen.
Score: 94

4 Creative genius boss

2013 Big Smooth Old Vine Zinfandel, California (Vintages 470179, $24.95, in stores only)

If you work for a creative genius, odds are they didn't move up the ranks by MBA skills alone. So give a bottle that's both smart and scrumptious — such as The Big Smooth, which just hit shelves. The leg-lamp label symbolizes the holidays because it's a prop from A Christmas Story; the plum velvet label mirrors the wine's flavour and texture; and the wine's instant appeal, complexity and polished purity of fruit says you know your stuff. Best part? None of this will be lost on the recipient.
Score: 91

5 Button down boss

2010 Montecillo Rioja Reserva, Rioja, Spain (LCBO 621003, $18.15)

If your boss is the buttoned-down type, s/he no doubt has a built-in, knee-jerk, deeply-ingrained appreciation of the classics. And this traditional Rioja Reserva, with six years of age on it, is sure to please and offers exceptional value for money. It's sleek glossy texture slides across the palate then broadens and deepens almost instantly to reveal rich but bone dry flavours of black cherry and black raspberry edged with vanilla bean, milk chocolate, coffee bean, toasty oak and toffee. A lovely chalky-texture on the finish holds the flavour intact for ages. You'll want to buy one for yourself, too. **Score: 92**

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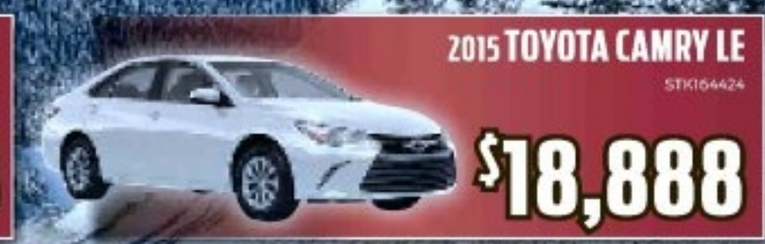

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Holiday entertaining 911

You did everything right. You kept your guest list tight because you knew a dinner party with more than six people was too much. Then, the calls started. A friend's got a new boyfriend he is dying to introduce you to. Your sister's best friend is in town. And so on. Now your intimate dinner is a group of twelve. Do you panic and cancel the whole thing? Nah, you've got this. Or rather, we've got this. A smart menu and a few iron-clad rules and you'll be the host with the most. **CERI MARSH AND LAURA KEOGH**

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A secret weapon to leave them thinking you cooked all day

Roast Pork Tenderloin with Apples and Sweet Potato

Pork loin cooks quickly and takes on flavours beautifully. As your first guests arrive, pop it in the oven and by the time you're done with hors d'ouevres, it will be ready.

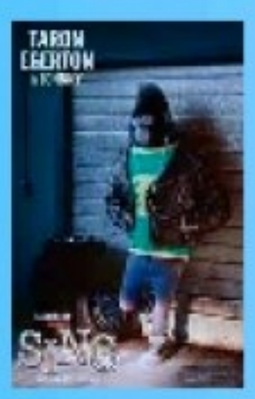
Ingredients:
- 1.25 – 1.5 kg pork loin
- 3 Tbsp Dijon mustard
- 3 Tbsp maple syrup
- 2 tsp thyme, finely chopped
- 2 Tbsp apple cider vinegar
- 1 large firm-fleshed apple, peeled, cored and chopped into 1/2 inch wedges
- 1 smallish sweet potato, chopped into 1/2 inch discs
- 1 onion, peeled and sliced into 1/4 inch rounds
- salt and pepper

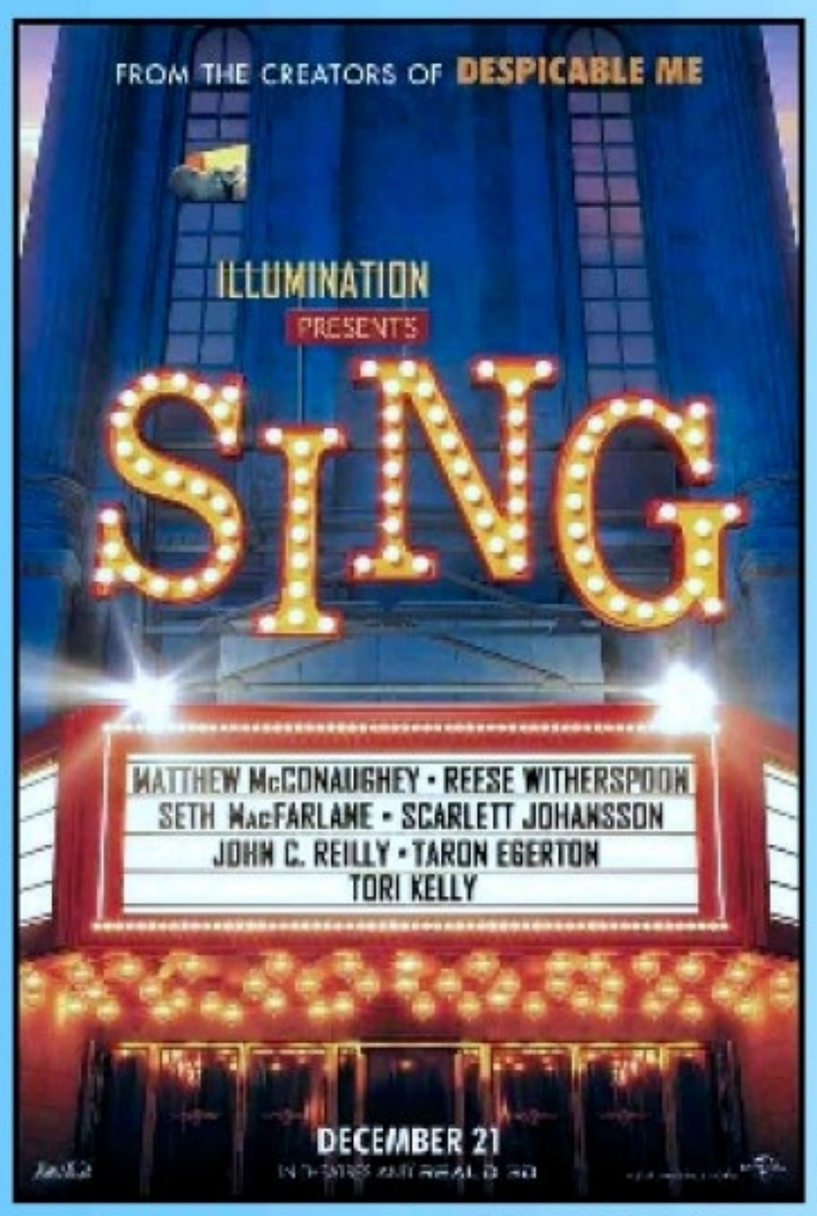
Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 425 degrees. In a small bowl, mix together 1 Tbsp dijon, 1 Tbsp maple syrup, 1 Tbsp vinegar. Assemble your fruit and veggies in two rows in a roasting dish. Brush the marinade over everything. Pop them in a hot oven for about 25 minutes.

2. In that same little bowl you're going to mix up 2 Tbsp of Dijon, 2 Tbsp syrup, 1 Tbsp vinegar and the thyme. Season your pork loin with a grind of salt and pepper, then brush this marinade all over it. Take the roasting pan out of the oven and place your loin in between the two rows of fruit and veg. You might have to nudge them apart a bit but it's fine if they overlap. Put it all back in the oven for 20 to 25 minutes. You want the internal temperature of pork to be between 140 and 145 degrees.

3. Take everything out and cover with foil and let the meat rest for about 10 minutes. Slice your meat and serve a couple of slices and a scoop of fruit and vegetables on each plate.





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Great bites from the cheat sheet to the baking sheet to the platter

Crispy Brussels Sprouts and Sweet Potato Tarts

All the elements of these little bites can be prepared in advance, warmed and then assembled giving your guests the perfect holiday bite.

Ingredients:
- 1 refrigerated pie crust
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 sweet potato, cut into 1/2 inch cubes
- 2 tablespoons of butter salt
- 2 cup Brussels sprouts, quartered
- 2 tablespoons pomegranate seeds
- 1 teaspoon fresh rosemary

Directions:

1. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper. Place pie crust on floured work surface. Using a 1 1/2 inch cookie cutter dipped in flour, cut out 24 rounds; transfer to prepared sheet, spacing 1/2 inch apart. Place in freezer until dough is firm.

2. Preheat the oven to 400. Toss sweet potato with 1 tablespoon of olive oil and sprinkle with salt. Roast in the oven until fork tender, about 20 minutes. Mash potatoes and then mix in butter. Do ahead and store in an airtight container in the refrigerator.

3. Toss Brussels sprouts with remaining tablespoon of oil and salt. Roast in the oven at 425 until browned and tender, about 25 minutes. Do ahead and store in an airtight container in the refrigerator.

4. When you're ready to assemble, preheat oven to 400. Bake crusts until light golden, about 15 minutes. Transfer to platter.

5. Re-warm sweet potato on the stove top. Crisp sprouts in the oven. Once your vegetables are warm begin assembling by adding a teaspoon of potato to each tart. Top with sprouts and a few pomegranate seeds. Sprinkle the tarts on the platter with rosemary.

Rope in the eager early arrival for these zesty palate-setters

Pears with Goat Cheese and Cranberries

You know how there is always one person that comes too early to the party. Well, this is the easy little assembly job you have them do while you finish the rest.

Ingredients:
- 2 pears, cored and cut into two dozen slices
- 1 tablespoon orange or lemon juice
- 1/2 cup goat cheese
- 1 teaspoon honey
- 2 tablespoons pistachio pieces
- 2 tablespoons cranberries

Directions:

1. Core pears and cut into slices. Toss in orange or lemon juice to keep from browning.

2. Mix cheese with honey then spread cheese on widest part of pear slice. Shower cheese with cranberries and some pistachio pieces. Arrange on platter and serve.

To meet grape expectations get groundwork in the night before

Grape and Parmesan Flatbread Pizza

This sweet and salty bite tastes great warm or at room temperature. Either way, you can prepare your flatbread the night before and have it ready to roll.

Ingredients:
- 2 tbsps olive oil
- 10 to 12 seedless grapes, sliced lengthwise
- 1 cup Parmesan or Fontina cheese, grated
- 2 handfuls of arugula

Directions:

1. Preheat your oven to 450 degrees. Place your flatbread on a baking sheet. Brush the flat bread with olive oil. Sprinkle the cheese evenly over the flatbread. Top that with a scattering of grapes.

2. Bake for about 5 to 10 minutes until cheese melts and grapes begin to blister.

3. Remove from the oven and top with arugula and sea salt and pepper. Slice into thin pieces.

LIQUID ASSETS PETER ROCKWELL

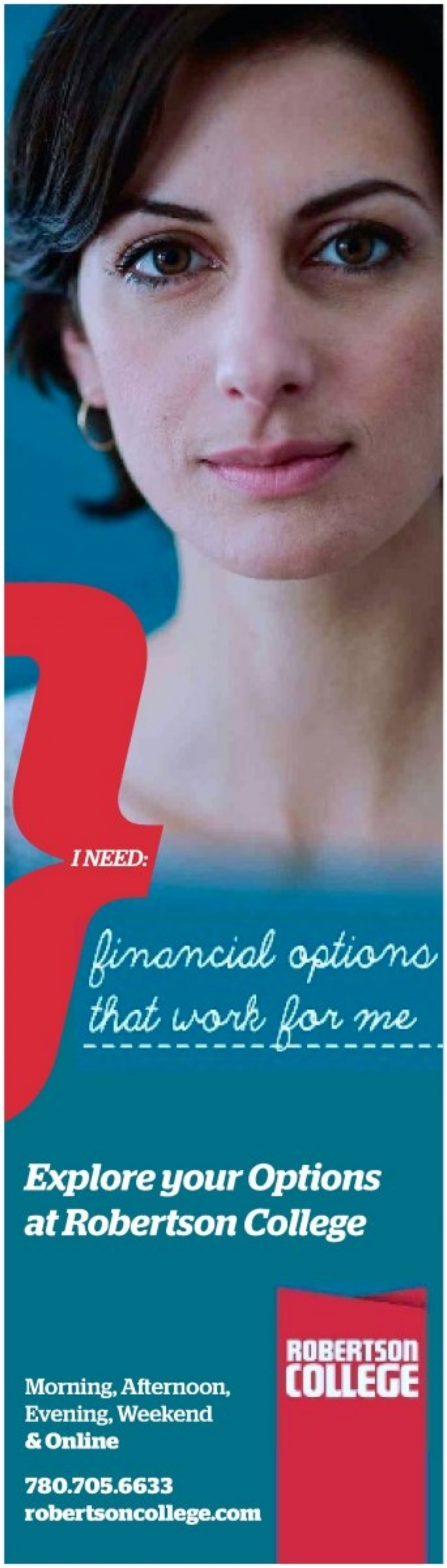
Warm to these wonderful winter brews

For those of you who consider beer a summer tipple, it's time you opened your minds, and mouths, to how breweries get their winter on. While the concept of a "winter warmer," a seasonal brew that's characteristically dark and boozy, dates back to old-timey England, North American brewers have run with the idea, often adding some sort of flavouring to spice things up.

The Muskoka Brewery in Ontario makes Winter Beard Double Chocolate Cranberry Stout (750ml, $13.49-$15.99), an irreverent interpretation that's consumption has become a Christmas tradition for Canadian beer fans. You'd think that at 8 per cent it would be an unruly monster. It's actually a creamy pussycat that's perfect for sipping by a roaring fire.

For those who prefer their holiday beer to be a lot less of a warmer, England's Wychwood Brewery offers Bah Humbug Christmas Cheer! (500ml, $3.19-$4.24), a traditional U.K. ale with an Ebenezer Scrooge inspired label. At 5 percent, it's one of which you can easily drink two.

Prices reflect the range across the country. Some products may not be available in all provinces.



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2016 Titan XD Platinum Reserve model shown*

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AMVIC Licensed. Offers available from December 1 – 31, 2016. Rogue One: A Star Wars Story © 2016 & TM Lucasfilm Ltd. *Boxing Month Bonus applies to cash purchase only. Maximum $2,000 available on 2017 Altima. *No payments for 90 days applies to any new and previously unregistered 2016 Micra (except S MT SSLG56 AA00)/2016 Versa (except S MT B5RG56 AA00)/2016 Sentra (except S MT C4LG56 AA00)/2016 Rogue (except S FWD Y6RG16 AA00) models financed through Nissan Canada Finance Inc. ("NCF"), on approved credit, between Dec. 7 2016 and Jan. 3, 2017. Offer only applies to finance contracts through NCF with a term of 72 months or less. Bi-monthly payments are deferred for 90 days. Contracts will be extended accordingly. Interest charges (if any) will start to accrue from the beginning of the finance contract and the purchaser will repay principal and interest bimonthly over the term of the contract, but not until 90 days after the contract date. Conditions apply. Offer is subject to change or cancellation without notice. Payments cannot be made on a weekly basis, for advertising purposes only. *Representative monthly lease offer based on a new 2017 Rogue S FWD/2017 Pathfinder S 4x2/2017 Titan Crew Cab S: 0.99%/4.75%/0% lease APR for 60/60/24 months on a maximum of 20,000 km/year with excess charged at $0.10/km. Total lease obligation is $16,457/$22,847/$11,049. Lease Cash of $750/$0/$6,500 is included in the advertised offer. *Total Standard rate finance incentives of $5,600/$6,800/$15,000 applicable fees, manufacturer's rebate and dealer participation. License, registration, insurance and applicable taxes are extra. Offers are available on approved Finance Cash that will be deducted from the negotiated selling price before taxes; and (ii) $600/$800/$1,000 Loyalty Conquest Cash that will be determined by Nissan Canada Inc. ("NCF") in its sole discretion. Proof of current ownership/lease/finance contract will in the 90 days preceding the date of lease/finance of an Eligible New Vehicle (defined below), have leased or financed a 2007 or newer Nissan, Honda, Toyota, Mazda or Hyundai brand vehicle (an "Existing Vehicle") within past 90-days. Eligibility for the Offer will be determined by Nissan Canada Inc. ("NCF") in its sole discretion. Proof of current ownership/lease/finance contract will be required. Offer is not transferrable or assignable, except to the current owner's spouse or a co-owner/co-lease of the existing vehicle (either of whom must reside within the same household as the intended recipient of the offer). Individuals who purchased/leased a vehicle under a business name can qualify for the program provided that the new deal is not a fleet deal and that the individual can provide valid documentation that they are the registered primary owner of the business. If the eligible customer elects to lease or finance a new and previously unregistered model year 2016 Nissan brand vehicle (excluding NV, Fleet and daily rentals) (an "Eligible New Vehicle") through Nissan Canada Finance Inc. (collectively "NCF"), then he/she will receive a specified amount of NCF Loyalty/Conquest Cash, as follows: (i) 2016 ALTIMA ($2,000); (ii) 2016 MICRA/VERSA NOTE/SENTRA ($500); (iii) 2016 JUKE/ROGUE ($600); (iv) 2016 PATHFINDER ($800); (v) 2016 TITAN XD ($1,000); (vi) 2017 TITAN HALF TON ($1,000); (vii) 2017 MICRA/VERSA NOTE/SENTRA ($500); (viii) 2016 JUKE/ROGUE ($600); (ix) 2017 ALTIMA ($1,250); (x) 2017 ROGUE/JUKE ($600); (X) 2017 PATHFINDER ($800); Loyalty/Conquest Dollars will be applied after taxes. Offer is combinable with other NCF incentives, but is not combinable with the Nissan Loyalty program. Offer valid on vehicles delivered between December 1-31, 2016. *Models shown $38,519/$37,409/$50,399/$49,319/$59,021/$76,821 Selling price for a new 2017 Rogue SL/PRO0/2016 Rogue SL/BK00/2017 Pathfinder Platinum/2016 Pathfinder Platinum/2017 Titan PRO-4X/2016 Titan XD Platinum Reserve (AA00). Offers include freight and PDE charges ($1,795/$1,795/$1,795/$1,795/$1,795/$1,795) air-conditioning levy ($100), applicable fees, manufacturer's rebate and dealer participation. License, registration, insurance and applicable taxes are extra. Offers are available on approved credit through Nissan Canada Finance for a limited time, may change without notice and cannot be combined with any other offers except stackable trading dollars. Vehicles and accessories are for illustration purposes only. See your dealer or visit Nissan.ca/Loyalty. See your participating Nissan retailer for complete details. Certain conditions apply. ©2016 Nissan Canada Inc.

metro WHEELS
Your essential daily news

Ford Performance introduces race-ready Mustang for track only

It'll make you feel like a teen again

THE CHECKLIST | 2017 SUBARU WRX STI REVIEW

THE BASICS

Engine: 2.5L turbo four-cylinder
Power: 305 hp, 290 lb-ft
Transmission: Six-speed manual
Fuel Economy (L/100 km): 13.8 city, 10.2 hwy
Price: Starts at $40,795 (for Sport model)

LOVE IT
- Engaging drive
- Daily usability
- Fandom

LEAVE IT
- Cop magnet
- Inferior infotainment

REVIEW

WRX STI has high level of driving engagement

Jodi Lai
AutoGuide.com

Subaru people are among the most vocal in the world of automotive fandoms about how much they love their cars.

I've driven practically the whole lineup of Subaru cars, and while they are very decent vehicles, I was never overwhelmingly impressed by them. They were good, but not the best. The Subaru fandom always left me a bit confused, and I assumed they adhered to some sort of cult mentality with their blind faith in a quirky brand.

That's until I finally got to drive the 2017 Subaru WRX STI.

I am now able to fully understand the draw of the STI. The beautiful thing about it — and let's not kid ourselves, it's not how it looks — is how it makes you drive like a teenager who has nothing to lose. There's a level of driving engagement that is pretty much unmatched by anything else in its price range. It's impossible not to have fun when driving it, even when you're going slow. Cars like this are really rare, and I was actually really surprised by how giddy I felt driving it.

The one thing that people might not like about this car is that drama. Nobody is going to see this car and assume a responsible adult is driving it. Passersby and law enforcement will notice the huge hood scoop and comically large wing sitting on the trunk, hear the exhaust's aggressive cracks and burbles, and see someone who's looking for trouble. I think that's all part of the fun. Sleepers have their place in the world, but I'm just so entertained by the constant drama surrounding this car.

The fun starts with the powertrain, a turbocharged 2.5-litre boxer four-cylinder and permanent full-time all-wheel drive. Also, the STI is one of the only cars that is still exclusively available with a manual transmission. This six-speed manual is great to use, with short and precise throws.

The brakes are sharp, the clutch is the right weight and feels intuitive to use and the steering is also fantastic, heavy, dialed-in and responsive, and quicker than WRX. Off-the-line acceleration is freaky fast, though not drag strip fast, and max torque is available as early as 2,000 rpm. There is a wee bit of turbo lag, but the car feels light, and like it's always ready to throat-punch you, but is also entirely manageable at the same time.

I finally understand what Subaru fanboys are always going on about.

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This custom Lexus is literally LIT

IN BRIEF

Alfa Romeo's stunning sedan finally has a price

The 2017 Alfa Romeo Giulia will start from $50,790 including destination in Canada. The base-model Alfa Romeo Giulia is powered by a 2.0-litre turbocharged four-cylinder engine with 280 horsepower and 306 pound-feet of torque while paired to an eight-speed automatic transmission. Standard on the sedan are leather seats, 10-way power front seats including four-way lumbar, bi-xenon headlights with signature LED daytime running lights and LED tail lights, dual exhaust, backup camera with dynamic gridlines and rear park sensors, bright chrome window trim surround, remote proximity sensor with push button start, remote start, seven-inch full-colour TFT display and more.

JASON SIU/AUTOGUIDE.COM

WHEELS ROUNDUP

News driving the auto industry brought to you by AutoGuide.com

LED LIGHTS

Lexus stars in music video

Producing 175,000 lumens when fully illuminated, the Lexus LIT IS has just debuted featuring 41,999 programmable LEDs. According to the Japanese luxury automaker, the custom IS was designed to send a bold signal, with the LEDs turning the sedan into a screen capable of broadcasting graphics and videos. The LIT IS is featured in U.K. chart-topping artist Dua Lipa's new music video for her hit song Be the One. To showcase the Lexus IS as a work of art, technology, and design, Lexus teamed up with Vevo to use hand-applied LEDs to help generate colourful, mesmerizing animations in response to gestures and music. If all the LED strips that were used on the LIT IS were placed end to end, it would stretch half a mile in length.

JASON SIU/AUTOGUIDE.COM

AUTO SHOWS

FCA picks Vegas over Detroit to debut e-car

In a surprising move, Chrysler will not debut a new model at the 2017 Detroit Auto Show. Instead, Fiat Chrysler Automobiles (FCA) will reveal a new vehicle at the 2017 Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas, suggesting its debut will be high-tech and possibly tied to its relationship with Google.

JASON SIU/AUTOGUIDE.COM

CABIN

Land Rover gets into Xmas spirit

Land Rover has created a Christmas cabin that fits in the back of the Discovery Sport SUV. The cleverly designed cabin has enough space for two adults to sleep snugly in temperatures as low as -20 C, Land Rover said. It folds down to fit in the rear of the Discovery Sport, which means even Santa can fit it on his sleigh this Christmas.

JASON SIU/AUTOGUIDE.COM

"Poopfest. It's terrible": Seattle Seahawks cornerback Richard Sherman is tired of Thursday night games

Oilers smothered by Jackets in third period

NHL

Columbus continues its streak with 7th straight win

Sam Gagner had a goal and an assist as the red-hot Columbus Blue Jackets won their seventh straight game with a 3-1 victory over the Edmonton Oilers on Tuesday.

Cam Atkinson and Matt Calvert also scored for the Blue Jackets (18-5-4), who have gone 8-0-1 in their last nine games.

Tyler Pitlick responded for the Oilers (15-12-5), who have lost five of their last six outings.

Edmonton got on the scoreboard first, just past the midpoint of the opening period as a hard-charging Pitlick got to a rebound in the blue paint and chipped it over Blue Jackets goalie Sergei Bobrovsky.

At Rogers Place

3	1
JACKETS	OILERS

Columbus tied the game on the power play eight minutes into the second period when Gagner came back to haunt his old team, with a puck going off the toe of his skate and past Edmonton goalie Cam Talbot for his fourth goal in the last four games and 12th of the season.

The Blue Jackets made it 2-1 seven minutes into the third as a pass deflected to Atkinson and he hammered his 11th of the season past Talbot.

Columbus added to its lead 1:36 later when Calvert took advantage of a sloppy Oilers line change and rifled a shot off Talbot's arm and into the net.

The Jackets completely took over in the third, outshooting Edmonton 12-0 midway through the period.

Both teams are off until Friday, when the Oilers play host to the Tampa Bay Lightning and the Blue Jackets play the second game of a three-game Western Canada road swing in Calgary.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Blue Jackets goalie Sergei Bobrovsky makes a save as David Savard and the Oilers' Ryan Nugent-Hopkins battle for the rebound on Tuesday night. JASON FRANSON/THE CANADIAN PRESS

IN BRIEF

Hurricanes storm back for wild victory over Canucks

Justin Faulk scored the go-ahead goal 5:56 into the third period, and the Carolina Hurricanes rallied from three goals down to beat the Vancouver Canucks 8-6 on Tuesday night.

Jeff Skinner scored two goals, with his second starting Carolina's wild comeback. The Hurricanes scored six goals in the third — including four in a 4:40 span — to erase a 5-2 deficit.

Michael Leighton made 13 saves in relief of Cam Ward, who stopped 15 shots. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Canadian junior team makes its first four cuts

Defenceman Victor Mete and forwards Nick Merkley, Brett Howden and Austin Wagner were the first four cuts at the Canadian junior team selection camp after helping the squad to 3-0 exhibition win over a U Sports all-star team on Tuesday afternoon in Boisbriand, Que.

Five more cuts are expected before the four-day camp closes on Wednesday.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Oleksiak wins Lou Marsh

SWIMMING

Four Olympic medals help her edge Crosby for the award

You could excuse Penny Oleksiak for being a little distracted during her high school law class on Tuesday.

After winning four Olympic medals last summer in Rio, she knew she was in the mix for the Lou Marsh Trophy as Canada's athlete of the year. Oleksiak's teacher let her check her phone during class and the 16-year-old swimmer eventually got the news she was looking for.

Oleksiak was named the winner of the Toronto Star award, selected annually by a panel of sports journalists from across the country.

"It was pretty exciting when I found out," Oleksiak said on a conference call. "One of my teachers, Mr. McAlpine, is across the hallway. He was like freaking out after class when he found out. So that was fun."

It was the latest accomplishment in what has been a dream year for the Toronto swimmer.

Oleksiak, who won Olympic gold in the 100-metre freestyle, served as Canadian flag-bearer at the closing ceremony at Maracana Stadium. She added four more medals at the short-course world championship this month in Windsor.

"I think I really learned that I'm stronger than I think," Oleksiak said of her season. "I want to say that just because going into Rio, I definitely had my doubts about myself. I didn't think I'd be able to even get into finals.

> **I think I really learned that I'm stronger than I think.**
> Swimmer Penny Oleksiak

"I think I proved to myself that I trained pretty hard last year and that I was able to exceed expectations."

Oleksiak edged Pittsburgh Penguins star Sidney Crosby for the honour.

Other finalists were sprinter Andre De Grasse, golfer Brooke Henderson, Paralympic swimmer Aurelie Rivard, tennis player Milos Raonic and high jumper Derek Drouin.

Penny Oleksiak was named Canada's athlete of the year Tuesday after her four-medal Olympic debut in Rio. STEVE RUSSELL/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

"Congratulations @OleksiakPenny on winning the #LouMarsh Award — you've made Canadians so proud," Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said on Twitter.

Montreal Canadiens goaltender Carey Price took the honour last year. Oleksiak is the first swimmer to win the trophy since Mark Tewksbury in 1992. The Lou Marsh Trophy is named after a former Toronto Star sports editor.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

IN BRIEF

Everton defeat Gunners
Ashley Williams scored an 86th-minute winner as Everton came from behind to beat title-chasing Arsenal 2-1 at Goodison Park Tuesday.

Arsenal's title credentials took a hit with sloppy defending at the end of both halves with right back Seamus Coleman heading home unmarked for the equalizer in the 44th minute and centre back Williams rising highest at a corner to glance in the winner. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ritual banned by MLB
That baseball hazing ritual of dressing up rookies as Wonder Woman, Hooters Girls and Dallas Cowboys cheerleaders is now banned.

Major League Baseball created an Anti-Hazing and Anti-Bullying Policy that covers the practice, as part of the sport's new labour deal. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Russia bobsled event pulled after boycott threat
Avoiding what would have been a widely boycotted world championships, officials pulled this season's biggest bobsled and skeleton competition out of Russia on Tuesday after a number of sliders said they would not compete in a nation so enveloped in a doping scandal.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LeBron pins down his beef with president-elect Trump
If you take a close look at LeBron James' recent cover photo for Sports Illustrated's Sportsperson of the Year award, a safety pin can be spotted on the NBA superstar's lapel.

No, James isn't suffering some sort of wardrobe malfunction. Since last month's presidential election, the safety pin has become a symbol of solidarity with those Americans who fear they'll be disenfranchised by a Donald Trump presidency. The pin is intended to show that the wearer is a safe person to turn to.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SOCCER

Plastic-bag Messi meets the real deal

Nearly a year after an image of him wearing an improvised Lionel Messi jersey made from a plastic bag went viral, Murtaza Ahmadi finally met his idol.

The six-year-old Afghan boy made a special trip to Qatar, where Messi was with his Barcelona teammates to play a friendly on Tuesday. Murtaza walked out onto the field with the five-time world player of the year before the match. The boy became an internet sensation early this year when pictures of him playing near his home in eastern Ghazni province were widely circulated. They showed him wearing a plastic bag — in blue-and-white stripes, like the Argentina national jersey — with Messi and the No. 10 written in black marker. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Murtaza Ahmadi, 6, poses for a photo with Lionel Messi and Barcelona. GETTY IMAGES

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YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

Your daily crossword and Sudoku answers from the play page.

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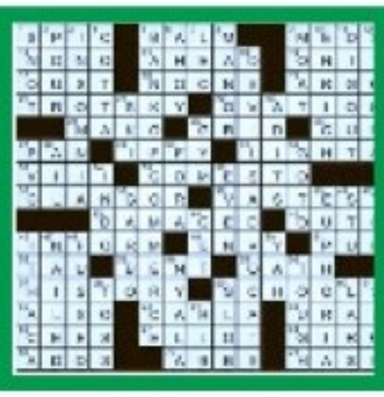

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7	8	5	2	4	6	9	1	3
3	6	1	8	9	5	2	7	4
6	4	7	1	8	2	5	3	9
2	1	3	5	6	9	8	4	7
8	5	9	3	7	4	1	6	2

MAKE IT TONIGHT

Comforting Mushroom Cheddar Chowder

PHOTO: MAYA VISNYEI

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

Even mushroom skeptics will love this creamy, vitamin-rich soup.

Ready in 30 minutes
Prep time: 5 minutes
Cook time: 25 minutes
Serves 4

Ingredients
- 1/4 cup unsalted butter
- 1 large shallot, diced
- 3 cloves garlic, diced
- 1 carrot, diced
- 1 lb mushrooms, sliced (we like to use a mix of cremini and portabello)
- 2 cups vegetable stock
- 3 Tbsp spelt flour
- 1 cup milk
- 1 teaspoon salt
- Pinch of pepper
- 1/2 cup grated cheddar cheese
- 2 Tbsp sour cream or Greek yogurt

Directions

1. In large pot over medium heat, melt half the butter. Add shallot, garlic and carrot and sauté until crisp-tender. Pour in half the stock, then add mushrooms, reduce heat and simmer for 15 minutes.

2. In a small saucepan, melt rest of the butter. Gradually add flour, whisking until smooth. Add milk and bring to a boil, then immediately reduce heat and continue whisking until mixture thickens a bit, 2 to 3 minutes. Add to soup.

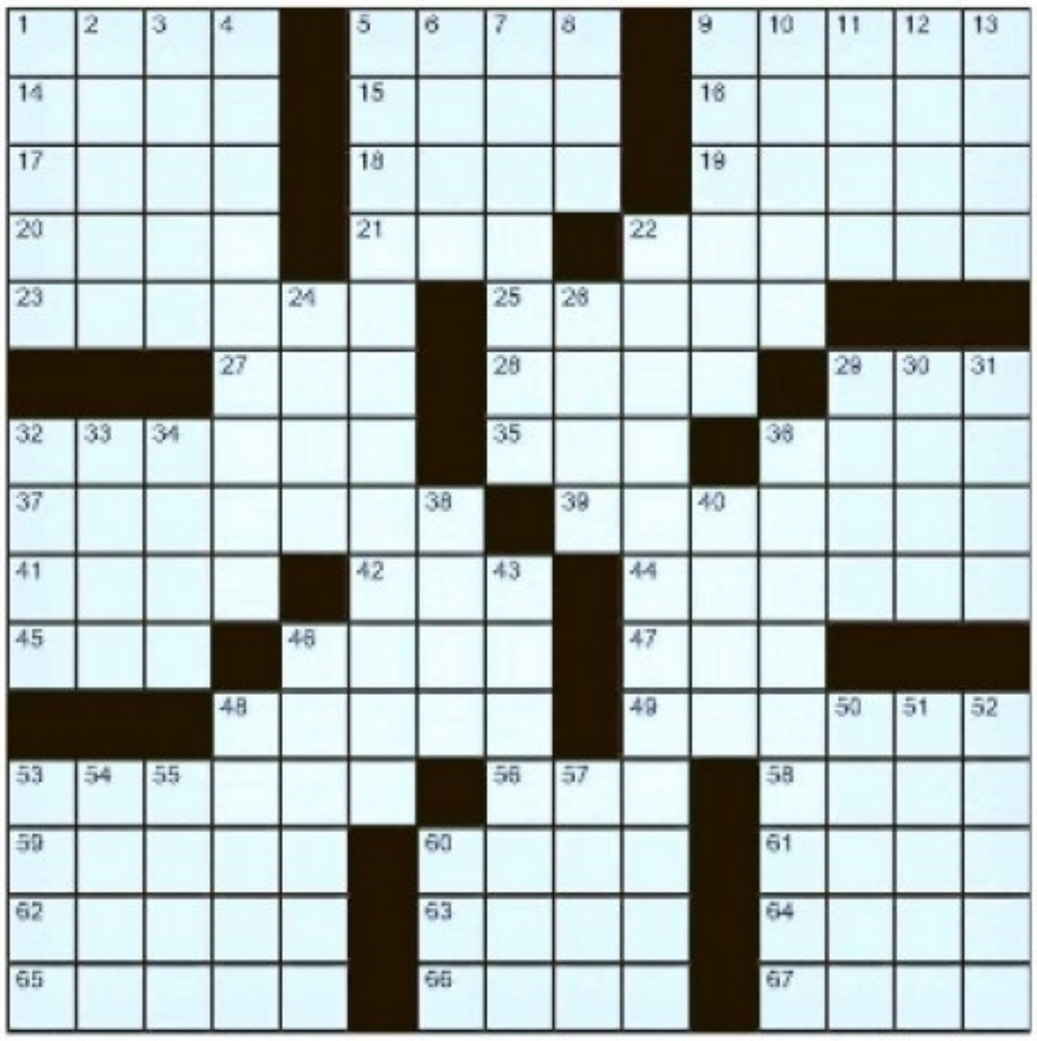
3. Stir in remaining stock. Season with salt and pepper. Remove pot from heat and, using an immersion blender, blend soup until desired consistency.

4 Ladle into bowls and serve with a helping of grated cheddar, dollop of sour cream or Greek yogurt.

FOR MORE MEAL IDEAS, VISIT SWEETPOTATOCHRONICLES.COM

CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



ACROSS
1. Marvel Comics supervillain, __ the Conqueror
5. Santa's gifts carrier
9. Sir Newton
14. Roman love god
15. Moisturizer ingredient
16. Figure out
17. Appraise
18. 'W' in WSJ
19. Muggy
20. Avoir's cohort
21. Richie, to Joanie
22. Grate
23. Austria's capital
25. Pastes
27. Driver's __.
28. Chemist's table salt
29. Stephen of "The Crying Game" (1992)
32. Hard blow sound
35. Cheers __, 1895
36. Twenty = Two __
37. Stovetop parts
39. 'Knee' and 'knot' both begin with one, __
41. Ripened
42. Mr. Pacino's
44. NHL team in Edmonton
45. Mr. Howard
46. Pesky fly
47. Compass dir.
48. 1999 flick in which Alanis Morissette plays God
49. Big name in fine art in Canada (Where the masterpiece at #50-Down went to the highest bidder)
53. __ lights (Hollywood premiere illuminators)
56. One plus One's answer
58. Scottish singer Donovan's actress daughter Ms. Skye
59. On __ (Winning)
60. Boyfriend
61. __, __ Hubbard (Scientology founder)
62. Novel's name
63. "__ fair in love..."
64. Gladiator's 2051
65. Discharge
66. Actor, Dick Van __
67. Slitherer's noises

DOWN
1. Alex __ ("Grey's Anatomy" character)
2. Violin-making family
3. __-Dame Cathedral, in Paris
4. Where Nuuk is the capital city
5. #9-Down is part of the what in the Canadian Rockies in Alberta?: 2 wds.
6. Wing-like
7. Fellow's fragrance
8. Ms. Ripa, to pals
9. Mount __ (Peak depicted in the circa 1926 oil on canvas at #50-Down)
10. Turns, as milk
11. __ mater
12. Keen
13. Relinquish control
22. Firm such as #49-Across: 2 wds.
24. Kind
26. Glasgow gal
29. Mr. Auberjonois
30. __'acte (Intermission)
31. Inquires
32. Ski lift
33. Men's label, __ Boss
34. Songbird variety
36. Made-for-TV movies
38. Hip poetry show
40. Extra's delivery on set
43. Distinguished
46. Medieval 'mug'
48. Barbie and Ken
50. As per #49-Across... Mountain __ (Group of Seven artist Lawren Harris' painting which recently sold for a record-breaking $11.21 million)
51. Organic compounds
52. German filmmaker Ms. Riefenstahl's
53. Fill, as hunger
54. Li'l math course
55. Automatic
57. Stroll
60. U2 song

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS Your daily horoscope by Francis Drake

Aries March 21 - April 20
Today your focus is on home and family. If you get a chance, you will prefer to cocoon at home and hide from the busy world out there.

Taurus April 21 - May 21
You have a need to communicate with others today, which is why it's a good day to talk to siblings, relatives and neighbors. It's time to plug in to the local gossip scene.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
If shopping today, you will be more emotional than usual about what you choose to buy. Yes, this could lead to retail therapy.

Cancer June 22 - July 23
Today the Moon is in your sign, which will make you more emotional than usual about practically anything. However, it also improves your luck.

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
Work alone or behind the scenes today, because that will make you feel better. You want to pull in and hide somewhat. Take a breather from your busy social life.

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
A conversation with a female acquaintance might be meaningful today. In fact, this conversation might actually prompt you to modify or change your future goals.

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Personal details about your private life may become public today. Be aware of this in case you have to do some damage control.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Take a trip or do something different today, because you need a change of scenery. At least change your daily routine. Visit an exotic restaurant.

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
) Today you might want to take care of loose details about inheritances and shared property, because that would be appropriate. (But you won't want to let go of something.)

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Be prepared to go more than halfway when dealing with others, because the Moon is opposite your sign today. This simply requires a little tolerance and compromise.

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Make an extra effort today to do something to help you feel better organized. Put your papers in neat little piles; clean out the backseat of your car. Do something.

Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
This is a playful, flirtatious and prankish day! Enjoy fun times with others, especially younger people. You might extend an invitation to a social event to a boss.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

Every row, column and box contains 1-9

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Nav, Sunroof, 20" Rims, Camper Mirrors, Sliding rear window, Painted Bumpers

SALE PRICE

REGULAR PRICE $83,805

$69,995 | $413 BIWEEKLY | FINANCE 96mo.

2016 GMC TERRAIN

Stock # S0085
Bluetooth, Cruise Control, Rear Camera, 17' Rims, Power Heated Mirrors

SALE PRICE

REGULAR PRICE $30,250

$23,995 | $142 BIWEEKLY | FINANCE 96mo.

2016 CHEVROLET CORVETTE

Stock # S0573
Great Christmas present for yourself or loved one. Can't beat this price.

SALE PRICE

REGULAR PRICE $69,980

$59,995 | $354 BIWEEKLY | FINANCE 96mo.

2016 CHEVROLET CRUZE 2LT "FULLY LOADED"

Stock # S0696
Heated Leather Seats, Sunroof, RS Package, Nav, Rear Camera, Premium Stereo

SALE PRICE

REGULAR PRICE $27,390

$21,995 | $130 BIWEEKLY | FINANCE 96mo.

2016 CHEVROLET TRAX AWD

Stock # S0709
Power seat, AC, Remote Start, Cruise, Rear Park Assist, Rear Camera

SALE PRICE

REGULAR PRICE $30,550

$24,995 | $147 BIWEEKLY | FINANCE 96mo.

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1 of 17 vehicles give away is a General Motors promotion and is not paid out by the dealership. The value of the vehicle won is up to $35,000. You must enter the contest in store to win. You get to win a vehicle or you get to win cash. The minimum amount to win is $500 with the possibility to win up to $17,000. $500 is already reflected in sale price. Connect &Win does not apply to Cadillac. 0% over 84 does not apply to Cadillac. Payments are based on 96month financing at %3.99 OAC. For Example Stock # S0696 - $21,995 plus 5% GST is $23,094.72. Cost of borrowing is $3914. Cash rebates of $15,000 apply to Stock # S0801. All cash rebates will vary by model. Up to $10,000 cash back is added to the final selling price of the vehicle and interest is paid on the full amount.